A Personal Testimony

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this is

My Story

From the Kingdom Hall to Kundalini

«You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.» — John 8:32

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I want to tell you something before I tell you everything else: I did not choose this path. It chose me. And for a long time, that felt less like a blessing and more like something being taken away.

This is the story of how I went from being a dedicated Jehovah's Witness — someone who knocked on doors, studied every week, shaped his entire life around an institution — to being disfellowshipped, spiritually homeless, and eventually something I don't have a clean word for. A researcher. A synthesist. Someone who found the thing the institution was supposed to be pointing at, outside the institution entirely.

I'm telling this story because I know I'm not the only one who lived something like it. And because I think the path through it is worth documenting.

I. The World I Was Born Into

I was born on August 30, 1996, in Middletown, New York — a small city in the Hudson Valley, an hour and a half north of Manhattan. My heritage is Puerto Rican, Jamaican, and German. My family was Jehovah's Witnesses.

I want to be careful here about how I describe the world I grew up in, because it is easy to caricature it from the outside and I am not interested in caricature. The Jehovah's Witnesses I knew were, for the most part, sincere people. They believed genuinely. They cared about each other. The community was real, the relationships were real, the sense of shared purpose was real.

What was also real: the total architecture of the world they lived in was controlled by a single organization based in Brooklyn, New York, that claimed to be the exclusive channel of divine truth on earth. Every doctrine, every interpretation of scripture, every social rule — who you could marry, who you could be friends with, what you could read, what you could celebrate — flowed from that central authority.

I was born into that world. I didn't choose it. By the time I was old enough to ask questions, the questions themselves felt dangerous.

When the questions themselves feel dangerous, you have already learned something important about the institution you're inside.

II. The Cracks

The cracks didn't come all at once. They never do. They came as small accumulations of things that didn't add up.

Doctrines that changed. Predictions that failed — the organization had predicted the end of the world multiple times, in 1914, 1925, 1975, and others, and had found explanations for each failure that required you to trust the organization more, not less. Translation choices in their own Bible — the New World Translation — that, when I looked closely, seemed designed to support predetermined conclusions rather than follow the source text. Historical revisionism about their own past that required ignoring documented evidence.

And then there were the human costs. People disfellowshipped — expelled from the community — and immediately cut off by family members who remained inside. Children who died because their parents refused blood transfusions on doctrinal grounds. Abuse cases handled internally rather than reported to authorities, to protect the organization's reputation.

I did not want to see these things. When you have built your entire social world inside an institution, seeing its failures clearly is not just an intellectual problem. It is an existential one. If the organization is wrong, then everything built on it — every relationship, every sacrifice, every decision made in its service — is built on something other than what you thought.

I saw it anyway. Eventually, you cannot unsee what you have seen.

III. The Expulsion

I was disfellowshipped — formally expelled from the Jehovah's Witnesses. The process is, by design, total. Once disfellowshipped, members of the congregation are instructed not to speak to you, not to acknowledge you, not to have any social contact whatsoever. This includes family members who remain Witnesses.

The stated purpose is spiritual: to pressure the expelled person to repent and return. The actual effect is that disfellowshipping weaponizes your most intimate relationships as leverage for compliance. It is the most effective tool a high-control group has, and it works because it is genuinely devastating.

I want to describe what that period felt like accurately: it felt like a death. Not my death — the death of the world I had grown up in. The community was gone. Some of the family relationships were strained in ways that took years to begin healing. The identity I had built entirely within that framework — who I was, what I believed, what I was for — had to be rebuilt from something closer to nothing.

The thing about hitting the ground is that you finally know where the ground is.

What I did not expect was that the ground would turn out to be more solid than anything I had been standing on before.

IV. The Years of Reading

After the expulsion, I read. That is the simplest way to say it. I read with the hunger of someone who has been on a restricted diet for years and has finally arrived somewhere with no rules about what you are allowed to eat.

I read the history of the Bible — not the version the organization taught, but the actual scholarly history: how the texts were written, by whom, when, and under what circumstances. How the canon was formed, and who made those decisions and why. What was included and what was left out.

I read the mystics. This was the most unexpected turn. I had been taught that mysticism was dangerous, demonic, the doorway to deception. What I found when I actually read Meister Eckhart, Rumi, the Upanishads, the Zohar, the Gnostic gospels — was not deception. It was the most direct and honest engagement with spiritual reality I had ever encountered.

I read the philosophers of consciousness, the neuroscientists studying near-death experiences, the quantum physicists whose findings kept bumping into questions that sounded more like the Upanishads than like Newton.

What I was looking for, I think, was permission to still believe something. The institution had been destroyed for me. But I had not — could not — conclude that nothing was real. Something had been real. I had felt it. I had felt it even inside the organization, in moments of genuine prayer and genuine stillness. I needed to know what that something was, outside the framework that had originally given it to me.

V. Nisan 14

There is a date I return to, not because I planned it but because it planned me. Nisan 14 — the date on the Hebrew calendar that corresponds to Passover, the night Jesus held the Last Supper, the night the Witnesses commemorate as the Memorial. A date I had observed every year of my life inside the organization.

On a Nisan 14 after my disfellowshipping, I had an experience that I have struggled to describe accurately ever since — not because it was vague, but because it was more specific than language comfortably handles.

What the traditions call a Kundalini awakening. A sudden, involuntary surge of energy through the body — unmistakable, undeniable, unlike anything I had encountered before or have encountered since in quite the same way. Accompanied by an interior knowing that was not arrived at by reasoning. A direct contact with something I can only call presence. Not a voice. Not a vision. Something more fundamental than either.

I did not know what to call it at the time. I found the name later, in the literature of traditions that had been cataloguing this experience for thousands of years — in Hinduism, in the Kabbalistic accounts of merkabah mysticism, in the Christian mystics' descriptions of infused contemplation, in the Sufi accounts of *hal*, spiritual states that arrive unbidden and leave the person changed.

The experience did not prove a doctrine. It dissolved the need for one.

What I mean by that: the thing I had been searching for — direct contact with something real, something sacred, something that was not just doctrine or community or obligation — had arrived. Not through an institution. Not through correct belief. Through the interior, directly, without permission from anyone.

VI. The Synthesis

After Nisan 14, the reading took on a different quality. I was no longer looking for permission to believe. I was looking for the map of what I had touched.

I found it across traditions. The Kundalini literature in Hindu and Tantric texts. The Kabbalistic accounts of divine light. The Sufi poetry of Rumi, who kept describing, in different metaphors, the same dissolution of boundaries I had experienced. Meister Eckhart's accounts of the soul's return to the Godhead. The Buddhist pointing-out instructions of Tibetan Dzogchen, which describe the recognition of awareness itself as the destination.

These were not the same tradition. They were not saying exactly the same things. But they were pointing at the same territory — a territory I now had firsthand experience of, however briefly, however partially.

I began to write. What started as personal notes became something larger — an attempt to synthesize across traditions in a way that was intellectually honest, spiritually grounded, and accessible to people who had no background in any of them. People like I had been before the reading: spiritually hungry, institutionally burned, not sure what to do with either condition.

That synthesis became the Perennial Truth Library. A collection of research documents, essays, and guides built on a single premise: that the divine has always been accessible, that no institution has ever owned that access, and that the people most likely to find their way to it are often the ones who have already lost everything they thought was protecting them.

VII. Who This Is For

I know who I'm writing for because I was that person.

You left, or were pushed out, or slowly drifted until one day you realized you had already left in everything but name. You carry some combination of grief and relief about it. The grief is for the community, the certainty, the clear map of the world that the institution provided. The relief is harder to name but it is real — the relief of not having to perform belief you don't have, not having to defend things that don't add up, not having to manage the dissonance anymore.

And underneath both the grief and the relief: the hunger. The thing that made you religious in the first place, or that your religious upbringing pointed at even if it couldn't deliver it. The sense that there is something real at the center of the question. The intuition that what the institution claimed to be pointing at might actually exist, even if the institution itself was pointing crooked.

That hunger is not a pathology. It is not something to be cured by atheism or distracted away by busyness. It is the most important signal you have. It is pointing at something real.

The hunger is not the problem. The hunger is the compass.

The Perennial Truth Library exists for people who still have that hunger and have not yet found language for it that doesn't require them to sign back onto something they've already seen through.

I am not asking you to believe what I believe. I am not offering a new institution to replace the old one. I am sharing what I found when I stopped looking for permission and started looking for what was actually true.

If any of it is useful to you — take it. Leave the rest. The truth doesn't need your loyalty. It just needs your attention.

“You will know the truth,
and the truth will set you free.”

John 8:32 — words I was taught as a child inside an institution that made them conditional. They are not conditional.

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